

Fitz-Roy (1839, 2: 172) reported that the *Alacaluf* traded pieces of iron pyrites, used for striking fire, to the *Tehuelche*. 372 [439]

SOCIAL LIFE

Marriage and the family.—Direct information is available only for the later *Tehuelche*; our chief information on the domestic culture of the later *Tehuelche* comes from Sánchez Labrador, Viedma, Fitz-Roy, Musters, and Spegazzini. 114

Premarital chastity was seemingly rather strictly observed by girls. They were free to choose their husbands. Fitz-Roy (1839, 2: 152) reported that sometimes girls were betrothed while very young [child betrothal?]. Boys married around the age of 20; girls from 15 to 18 or so. The groom gave presents to the bride's father or parents; these presents were in some measure at least a bride-price; the father or parents of the bride also gave presents of equal value, which in case of later separation were the property of the bride (Musters, 1871, pp. 177-178; 1872, p. 201). The girl was brought by her father or the groom to the latter's *toldo*, where a wedding feast was given, including mares' meat. It was unlucky for any of the offal or meat of the mares to be eaten by the dogs. The shaman sang and gave advice at weddings. Residence was generally patrilocal. According to Viedma (1837 b, p. 74), a "cacique" always married the daughter or sister of another cacique. [836] 582 583 585 [577] 591

Marriage was mostly monogamous. Some men, however, had two wives; rarely three in the later 19th century, but earlier some had "four, five, or even more" (Fitz-Roy, 1839, 2: 152), and even five to eight (Sánchez Labrador, 1936, p. 73). No polyandry is reported (however, see Poya, p. 160); nor is either the sororate or levirate. 595

Wives were generally well-treated as well as loved. Wife beating was very rare. Adultery was not uncommon; in case of unfaithfulness on the part of a wife, her paramour suffered the penalty, not she (Viedma, 1837 b, p. 74). Divorce was uncommon, being usually sought by the wife. A man was not allowed to look toward his father-in-law when in conversation with him (Musters, 1871, p. 184). The aged were respected and well cared for. 593 837 586 606 888

Etiquette.—Proper names were not mentioned (Bourne, 1853, p. 150). Hospitality was the rule, to traveling strangers as well as to friends. Certain formalities were observed when two parties approached and came together, including answers to the host's questions before delivering a message (Musters, 1871, pp. 184-185). The relative absence of formalities on entering a tent (Moreno, 1879, p. 226) contrasted with *Arucanian* etiquette in this regard. [551] 576

Cleanliness of body was considered desirable, and bathing in the river was common; there was also a certain ideal of *toldo* cleanliness; 575 356

776 1822, 2: 90, who also gives soychuhèt, for "men that dwell with God beyond the world"; *Tehuelche*, Sánchez Labrador, 1936, p. 65, and Hervás, 1800-1805, 1: 133) Setebos (Pigafetta, 1906, 1: 56, 60, 78), Sesom or Sesó (Moreno, 1879, pp. 239, 387); Kck-a-once, Tchûr (Gardiner, 1852, pp. 23-24); Maiph (Beauvoir, 1915, pp. 180, 189, "espíritu bueno," "sombra"); Maipè (Borgatello, 1924, p. 22). The reiteration of the idea that the dead go to the Supreme Being after death is suggestive of the similar *Ona* conception, as is also the relative aloofness of the *Tehuelche* deity.

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775] Evil happenings were attributable to an evil spirit or evil spirits, known under the names of Cheleull, Cheleule (Pigafetta, 1906, 1: 60, 78), Atskannakanatz (Falkner, 1774, p. 116), Achekenat-kanet (D'Orbigny, 1835-47, 4: 220, "good and evil"); Agschem (Moreno, 1879, pp. 235, 416), Walichu or Gualichu (Sánchez Labrador, 1936, p. 66; Musters, 1871, p. 180; Borgatello, 1924, p. 22), Camalaspue (Viedma, 1837 b, pp. 75-76), Kérenk(e)n (Spegazzini, 1884, p. 237) Kerrkenge (Moreno, 1879, p. 387), Kakenga, Kubejken (Outes, 1913 a, pp. 486-487, "dios"); Jasemel (Peña, 1914, p. 11, "un Dios"). Gualichu is a non-*Tehuelchean* and non-*Araucanian* word. A good deal of *Tehuelche* religion seems to have consisted in propitiating and holding at bay these malevolent spirits, although some of them were apparently benevolent guardians of the *Tehuelche*. The best piece of rhea meat and the first bottles of liquor were offered to Walichu (Lista, 1879 a, p. 77).

821 Certain miscellaneous observances of a magico-religious nature have been recorded in fragmentary form. The new moon was given a salute with low muttered words (Musters, 1871, p. 179; 1872, p. 203). The cry of the nightjar over the camp or the toldo was an omen of sickness or death (Musters, 1871, p. 182; 1872, p. 203). It was taboo to injure nightjars (Musters, 1872, p. 203) and to take young half-fledged hawks from the nest (Coan, 1880, p. 113). Hair clippings could be used in black magic; when camp was broken, everything not taken away was burned lest some enemy should get hold of the article and do harm to the previous possessor of it (Moreno, 1879, p. 239).

821 A lunar eclipse was attributed to Gualichu entering the moon and breaking it up; the people then would spit at the moon and throw stones at it to drive the evil spirit away (Borgatello, 1924, p. 22).

768 On starting to smoke, the smoker would blow a puff toward each of the four cardinal points and mutter a prayer (Musters, 1871, p. 174; 1872, p. 203). At marriage feasts, great care was taken lest the meat

825 or offal of the animals slaughtered therefor was touched by the dogs, as this would have been unlucky; at the shaman's child-curing rite,

777 in which a white mare was killed and eaten, care was taken that no dogs should approach (Musters, 1872, pp. 201-202). On the occasion

- 133 extended rolling plains, which appeared to stretch away into the distance, interrupting the chain of the Cordillera, as though there were a depression or break in the mountains, no hills of large size being visible on the horizon. Whilst
- 777 lying down smoking on this hill, I picked up several pieces of opal and cacholong combined, and as I was idly forming them into different patterns on the ground, and had arranged a circle resembling a miniature Indian grave, one of my companions observing what I was doing, grew very angry, and said, 'That will bring ill luck,' evidently believing that I was mentally compassing the death of some one by witchcraft. As I had no wish to be killed, by way of prevention of any imaginary spells, I quickly gathered up the specimens, many of which were afterwards lost in the ensuing journey. The Indian name for this place is Yaiken-Kaimak, signifying that it is the hill whence they espy the signal smoke denoting the approach of the Indians from the north.
- 702 We remained five days in this encampment, a general uneasiness prevailing, and arms being kept ready to hand. In addition to the usual hunting, under the orders of the cacique, we were engaged in performing exercises on horseback; this mounted drill being intended as a preparation in case we should find the northern Tehuelches at war with the
- 000 Araucanos or Manzaneros Indians. The plains to the westward abounded with guanaco, some thousands being enclosed in the circle at one time. One day that I had not accompanied the hunting party, I was strolling across the camp, having volunteered to occupy the post of the vidette on an adjacent hill, when I observed a guanaco, very tired, coming towards me; so, hiding behind a bush, I waited till he unsuspectingly approached, and then rushing out, balled him with a pair of ostrich bolas. As he was so close to me, his forelegs were perfectly tied up, and I had not much difficulty in despatching him with a blow on the head from another set of bolas. By this time I had attained a tolerable dexterity in the use of the bolas, and it was my invariable custom when not otherwise

512 party, interchange of visits and card parties with the recent arrivals, fishing, foraging for birds' eggs, spinach, &c., with some flirting, and, by way of business, a parlamento or two, made our time pass merrily enough at Henco.

535 Our hunting parties were under the direction of 'the oldest inhabitant,' an aged cacique called Guenalto, with venerable white hair, and who had been crippled by a lance-thrust, received to his honour be it said, while endeavouring to mediate between two of his friends. His great age and amiable character commanded universal respect; and on a hunting morning he would sit under a bush and speechify

[537] for half an hour, recounting old deeds of prowess, and exhorting us to do our best. The old man was a frequent and welcome visitor at our toldo, where he was encouraged to indulge to his heart's content in long-winded stories. My

755 compass greatly excited his curiosity, and he took it into his head that it possessed a magical power which could effect the restoration of the use of his arm. He accordingly begged to be allowed to hold it in his hand; and sat patiently, with an air of awe and faith combined, for an hour, afterwards declaring that the operation had done him much good. We 714 greatly pleased him by repairing his coat of mail, a complete tunic of heavy iron chains, of unknown antiquity, bound together by strips of hide, and weighing over a hundred-weight. This he informed me he only put on to defend himself from 'foolish Indians.'

● 777 His use of my compass was rivalled by the custom of other friends, who were wont to borrow it when engaged in a game of cards; their belief being that the magic instrument gave luck to the happy possessor for the time being; and I often thought that it was fortunate I had brought no other instrument, as 'shooting the sun' would have been certainly regarded as a piece of sorcery, and any death or accident happening afterwards would have been visited on the head of the magician. As it was, my taking notes was 203 often regarded with suspicious curiosity, and inquiries made

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE TEHUELCHES. 187

on his best horse, decorated with silver ornaments—if he⁵⁸⁵
possesses any—proceeds to the toldo of his intended, and^[583]
hands over the gifts. The parents of the bride then return
gifts of an equal value, which, however, in the event of a^[584]
separation (a rare event), become the property of the bride.
After this the bride is escorted by the bridegroom to his
toldo, amidst the cheers of his friends and the singing of the
women. Mares are usually then slaughtered and eaten on
the spot, great care being taken that the dogs do not^[777]
touch any of the meat or offal, as it is considered unlucky.
The head, backbone, tail, together with the heart and liver,^[782]
are taken up to the top of a neighbouring hill, as an offering
to the Gualichu, or evil spirit. An Indian is allowed to have⁵⁹⁵
as many wives as he can support, but it is to find a man
with more than two, and they generally only have one.

On the death of a Tehuelche all his horses, dogs, and other⁷⁶⁸
animals are killed, his ponchos, ornaments, bolas, and all
other personal belongings are placed in a heap and burned,
the widow and other womankind keeping up a dismal wailing,
and crying out loud in the most melancholy manner. The
meat of the horses is distributed amongst the relations on
both sides; and the widow, who cuts her hair short in front
and assumes black paint, repairs, bag and baggage, to the
toldo of her relations, or if she has none in the party, to the
toldo of the chief.

The body is sewn up in a mantle, poncho, or coat of mail,⁷⁶⁴
if the deceased possessed one, and is taken away by some of
the relations and buried in a sitting posture, its face to the
east, a cairn of stones being erected over the place, varying
in size according to the wealth and influence of the deceased.
I have never seen any of the graves described in Mr. Wood's⁷⁸⁴
work, but as my travels as a rule were confined to the in-
terior, they may exist in some part of the sea-coast; nor did
the exhumation and removal of the body ever come under my
notice, and I should be inclined to doubt its being ever
practised by the Tehuelches, inasmuch as it is a rule amongst

met with. Another superstition is that a two-headed guanaco exists in the south, the appearance of which is a forerunner of sickness. According to my informant, after its last appearance measles, or a similar disease, decimated the Southern tribe, the disease having been propagated by communication with Punta Arenas, where it was at that time rife.

Any unfamiliar object that they do not comprehend, as, for instance, a compass or a watch, is regarded with suspicion as being tenanted by an evil spirit. Sometimes these objects are supposed to bring luck at play, and are eagerly sought for. One of my companions was possessed of a watch, obtained in Punta Arenas, and, before playing cards, he would often ask me to set it going, the ticking being regarded as the voice of the hidden Gualichu. My compass was also in constant demand, but the privilege of temporary possession was necessarily restricted to a few favoured friends. I ex-

plained, to the best of my power, the use of this instrument, which was comprehended by many of them; and they became very fond of asking me to point out the precise direction of various points known to them, and were greatly delighted at the correctness with which the inquiries were generally satisfied. A locket, worn by me round my neck, was also regarded as a talisman, securing the wearer from death.

With all this superstition, regard for omens, and belief in demons, they by no means accord implicit faith and respect to the wizards. Nor do they trust to their spells alone in case of disease; many possess an acquaintance with medicinal herbs, and apply them with good effect. Besides being good farriers, they practise blood-letting, not only on the sick; but, like our grandfathers, at regular seasons have themselves blooded, believing it to be beneficial. Casimiro declared that the superior health of the Tehuelches, compared with that of the colonists or Christians, was attributable to this practice. They also understand and sometimes employ poisons, not to envenom their weapons, but for secretly taking off an enemy. Such cases are rare, but

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Valdivian people on the western side and the Argentines on the eastern shores. I quote some of his exact words: 'God has given to us these plains and hills wherein to dwell; he has provided us with the guanaco, from the skins of which to form our toldos, and from the young of which we make mantles to clothe ourselves with; also the ostrich and armadillo for food. Our contact with the Christians of late years has given us a taste for yerba, sugar, biscuit, flour, and other luxuries formerly unknown, but which now have become almost necessary to us. If we have war with the Spaniards, we shall have no market for our skins, ponchos, feathers, &c., therefore it is for our own interests to be on good terms with them; besides, there is plenty of room for all.' He then went on to state that he was endeavouring to find a route to Valdivia, avoiding Las Manzanas and the Picunche tribe of Indians, who are against all foreigners; and that if possible he would get families of Valdivian Indians, and endeavour to cultivate some of the valleys in the neighbourhood of the Rio Limay.

I was not at that time aware of Mr. Cox's descent from Lake Nahuel-huapi, or could at once have informed him of that means of communication with the settlements on the western side; still I doubt the practicability of that route for women and children carrying with them household goods and agricultural implements. After some more conversation, and receiving a general invitation to visit his toldo whenever I felt inclined, and a hospitable assurance that there would always be food for me if I was hungry, I retired to Casimiro's, whilst Foyel went away to play cards, taking with him my compass for luck, and curiously enough he won several horses, silver stirrups, and other valuables from the Tehuelches.

The following day a race took place, the Tehuelches first taking their horse up to the top of a neighbouring hill, where the doctor performed some magical ceremony to ensure his winning, which he did, though apparently inferior to his competitor. In this plain, called by the Indians Gatchen-005

- 137 We remained some days in this place, and whilst hunting in the surrounding country (where hares abounded), we observed a new description of spinous shrub with small ovate leaves and yellow flowers, resembling holly, and growing to about two feet in height. Casimiro and myself agreed to try
- 757 whether the leaves might not be medicinal, so a quantity were bruised and boiled: the infusion proved exceedingly bitter, reminding me of quinine, and acted as an admirable sudorific, being administered to the invalids with great success. In
- 133 one of our excursions we had crossed the hills and descended on a high elevated plain, concluding our hunt near a swelling eminence exactly resembling a huge 'barrow' thickly overgrown with shrubs, from which what appeared to be a salina was espied, to our great delight. Hinchel and myself being alone, and having a fat ostrich to discuss for dinner, determined to enjoy our meal by its shore, first testing the quality of the salt, a luxury which we had long been destitute of. Dismounting, we proceeded to investigate it; but
- [135] it, and digging down with knives a foot below the surface, the supposed salt proved to be bitter and nauseous nitrate of soda.
- 132 After quitting the vicinity of the Cordillera the weather had every day become warmer, and the frosts at night much lighter: indeed whilst in Telck some warm days were experienced, although the winter season was fast approaching.
- 137 Near this encampment the small edible root 'previously described as growing in the dried-up lagoons was found in abundance, and was collected by the women and children.
- [136] Cavies were plentiful in the hollows and valleys in the neighbouring hills, and even close to the encampment, but the chase of other game proved difficult, the hill sides being so strewn with stones as to render galloping a horse a
- 777 certainty of laming him. In this neighbourhood Hinchel pointed out a detached pinnacle of rock, much resembling that noticed at Geylum, and according to custom invoked a
- 135 blessing from the guardian spirit; and then he informed me

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The same ceremonial is observed on the attainment of puberty by a girl. The important event is announced by her father to the cacique, who thereupon notifies it to the doctor. The girl herself is placed in the "pretty-house", and no one allowed to enter it. Marriages amongst the Tehuelches are always those of inclination, and if the damsel does not like the suitor to her hand, her parents never force her to comply with their wishes, although the match may be an advantageous one. The usual custom is for the bridegroom, after he has secured the consent of his damsel, to send either a brother or some intimate friend to the parents, offering so many mares, horses, or silver ornaments for the bride. If the parents consider the match desirable, as soon after as circumstances will permit; the bridegroom, dressed in his best, and mounted on his best horse, proceeds to the toldo of his intended, and hands over the gifts; the parents then return gifts of equivalent value, which, however, in the event of a separation, are the property of the bride. After this the bride is escorted by the bridegroom to his toldo, amongst the cheers of his friends, and the singing of the women. Mares are generally then slaughtered, and a feast takes place. The animals being killed, cooked, and eaten on the spot, great care being taken that the dogs do not touch any of the meat or offal, as it is considered unlucky. The head, backbone, and tail, together with the heart and liver, are taken up to the top of a neighbouring hill, as an offering to the "Gualychu", or evil spirit. An Indian is allowed to have as many wives as he can support. However, it is rare to find a man with more than two, and they more generally only have one. [77]

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A curious custom prevails amongst these Indians with regard to their children. If a child hurts itself while playing, mares are slaughtered as a sort of thanksoffering that it did not die, a pretty

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3 [i.e. as for a newborn child. — Analyst]

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754 and sometimes his whole family, are destroyed. Casimiro, an enlightened Indian, for some time under the auspices of the missionaries at Santa Cruz, informed me that when his mother, or one of his wives—I forget which—died, he sent and had a woman killed who had caused the death by witchcraft.

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[777] Any instrument, the use of which is not understood, is looked
[789] upon as having some connection with witchcraft. For instance, a watch, which they look upon as bringing luck at play; my compass also was in frequent request, and a locket I wore round my neck was supposed to be a talisman securing the wearer from death.

000 I have not touched upon the language of the Tehuelches, but shall be happy to answer questions as to any words of common use amongst these people, and hope at a future time to publish a partial vocabulary of their language compiled during my residence amongst them.

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161 From the data I was enabled to acquire I should estimate the numerical strength of their population at seventy fighting men of the south, and about two hundred of the northern, making with women and children a total of about 1,400.

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105 Pampa—North of the Sengel river, a tributary of the Chupat, in latitude 44 deg. south, and about thirty miles from the Cordillera, we joined company with a party of the Pampa or Penck Indians already alluded to. It is impossible now to do more than mention the chief characteristic differences which, besides that of language, mark them out as a distinct race from the Tehuelche. Their stature and proportions are smaller, their countenances are inferior in intelligent expression. The women, however, who seem to have appropriated the marks of the not infrequent admixture of Spanish blood, are, as a rule, better-looking than the Tehau of the Tehuelches; the men when mounted on horseback are armed with peculiar long light lances, the shafts of which are made from a cane resembling bamboo found in the Cordillera. As to their religion I have reason to believe that they are worshippers of the sun; they however practise similar rites to those already described for propitiating the evil spirit, who is known by the same name. One custom not practised amongst the Tehuelches is a ceremony the Pampas perform before drinking intoxicating liquor. Four lances are pitched in the ground, round which the chiefs walk, each carrying a panikin containing a little liquor which they sprinkle partly on the lances and partly on the ground, muttering incantations all the time. These Pampa Indians I believe to have been the race armed with bows and arrows met with and described by the early navigators, and to have been the original inhabitants of the valley of the Rio Negro, where great quantities of flint arrow-heads and

502 in the centre of the closely-packed craft. One end of a lariat was fastened to the boat, and the other tied to the tail of a horse. A savage mounted, with one rein attached to the wooden bit on the up-stream side. Two others took the oars, one on each side, and a squaw was stationed on the top-gallant forecastle for the purpose of singing, to [333] insure good luck. All is ready. The old horse wades till [777] the depth of water compels him to swim, and the boat is pushed off. The rider floats on the horse's back, kicking the water with his feet, holding the rein in one hand, and grasping the mane with the other. "Chew! chew!" he shouts, at the top of his voice. The black swan in the forecastle opens her capacious mouth and sings, "Yek yah, youri miti! yek yah youri miti!" The two oarsmen dig away with might and main, while the younger fry swell the chorus with a "Yah! yah! yah!" The boat brings some heavy lurches to the windward, then yaws off to leeward; all owing to those lubberly oarsmen not meeting her with the helm in season. At length, after innumerable shiftings we reached the opposite shore, and waded up on dry land.

Several boats were constructed after the same unique model, and succeeded in crossing safely. Some of the horses, being better adapted to towing, were swam back to repeat the process, and our craft returned for a second freight. I watched the proceedings from the bank with intense interest, speculating on the probable consequences of an accident to any of the fleet. Such was their superstition, that, in the event of any ill befalling them, they would be quite likely to ascribe it to me, and serve me worse than Jonah was treated by his shipmates. The swiftness of the current, and the rudeness of their navi-